

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

## Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Thursday, November 15. 1705.

**S**OME that have observ'd in this Paper, the Author's Resolution, for some time to Address himself to the Convocation, have been some time big with Expectation, that according to the Custom of this Age of Ruffling our Superiours, I should Present them with some Memorial in the Modern Method, and fall foul upon the Clergy, with all the proper Invektives, which some of that Reverend Order have lately bestow'd upon their Neighbours.

This Paper is Calculated to the Undeceiving these Gentlemen, and to let such People know, that I shall not return Railing for Railing; and Reviling for Reviling; I shall Treat them not as they do, but as they ought to Treat their Brethren; which Duty if they do not perform, nor pay the Debt to Good Manners, which they owe as Men; I shall let them know I Condemn the Practise; not by falling into it, but by avoiding it my self.

Besides these sort of People are very much Deceiv'd in me, if they think that in what I have said of the Clergy in *England*, I would be understood to mean the whole Body of the Clergy in general.

I have never been backward to Express my self, with all that Reverence and Regard, to the Sober, Moderate, and Pious part of the Clergy of *England*, as becomes me, not in Charity only, but in real Duty and Respect.

And this is not in Print only, but on all Occasions in Conversation, both Publick and Private; for the Truth of this, I refer to all I have Printed in the World; I refer to several of the Clergy themselves, with whom I have the Honour to converse; and I Challenge all the World, to Charge me with the least Disrespect to them as a Body, either by Word or Writing in my Life.

If I have singled out some, who Disgrace their Cloath, and are Scandalous to their Profession, and spoken some Unhappy Truths of them, which the general Body of the Clergy really ought, ay, and really do Abhor them for, they must blame themselves; I hope none but the Guilty will think themselves Concern'd in it; and for those, let them Reform it, and that is the best way to Silence me, and Recommend them to a general Charity.

As to the Clergy in general, as a Body of Divine Rulers of, and Pillars to Support the Church of *England*, as the whole Body of *Dissenters*, have in general declar'd they are a True Church; so they must at the same time, allow them true Gospel Ministers; and this they Testifie among other things, by this very Special and most Undeniable Proof, that if a Church of *England* Divide, comes off from the Church, and Enters among the Dissenters, they Accept him as a Minister, without a Reordination or Recognition; a Charity, the Church has not yet Condescended to in the Case of the *Dissenters*.

Allowing them thus True Gospel Ministers, Legally Constituted and Ordain'd; I should shew my self very Ignorant of my Duty, or very Regardless of Performing it, if I did not Treat them with all that Reverence and Distance, due to the Sacred Office; and of my Manners also, if I did not Respect the Civil Dignity, Plac'd upon them, by the Favour and Consent of the Government and Laws.

Now whatever Opinion these Prejudic'd People, may have of the Author of this Paper, they shall, I hope have nothing to say to him, either as to his Duty or his Good Manners; and therefore it is, I say, this Paper is Calculated for their Disappointment.

The General Part of the Clergy of *England*, especially of the Dignifi'd Clergy, are Men of Worth, Men of Learning, Piety and Moderation, as such I shall apply to them; if any are otherwise minded, I am not Talking to them, they have neither Lot nor Portion in this Matter; I am aiming at the Nations Peace, and therefore am talking to those Gentlemen, who have shown

their Inclination to it; that as there is hopes; from their Healing Charitable Spirit, much may be done towards this Blessed Work; so I would not be wanting to offer a Mite, and take off as far as possible, the Scandal, which those, who set themselves against this good Work, raise upon the Dissenters, That they do not desire it upon fair Conditions.

In order to convince the worst of my Enemies therefore of the Sincerity of my Design, and that I mean nothing but what I say they will find these Papers, while thus applying themselves to the Convocation, doing it with all possible Precautions, Reverence and Respect; not only as from a Persons Addressing for Peace, and therefore suited to the Healing Requests; but as Respecting the Persons apply'd to, who ought to be Treated with a Decency becoming their Character, Profession, and the great Share they have in the Welfare of Religion in general, and the Establish'd Church in these Nations in particular.

Whether the Gentlemen will please to call this an Address, a Memorial, a Remonstrance, or by whatsoever Name or Title they please to Distinguish, I leave them at Liberty; the Subject is sad and serious: the Manner I desire should bear a Proportion both to the Dignity of the Assembly, and the Weight of the Case. I crave leave to be very plain, but shall ask Pardon if I Trespass. 'Tis a Case that requires Openness and Freedom. The Candor and Charity of the Assembly, will, I hope entertain me, with the same Respect the Innocence of my Design claims, and judge me with that Impartiality of Mind, as they would be judg'd in like Case.

If any Man enquire what Title I have to make this the Subject of my Concern, I vindicate my self from the Scandal of an Officious Medler, in Matters remote to my Sphere, by urging the Necessity, Weight, and exceeding Concern of what I am upon, even to every *Protestant* in the Nation; my own Share, and the Share of my Posterity in the Welfare of this Nation, both Civil and Religious, is as sufficient a Justification to my making this Address, as my having a House in the Street, is to my crying



ing Fire, and raising the Neighbours, when I see a House on Fire in the same Row.

But these are Discourses without Doors. The Reverend Assembly, to which this Paper now applies it self, are better Judges in this Particular; and claiming the common Privilege of speaking out what I have to say, I shall freely refer my self and these Papers to their Lordships Censure.

Wherefore without any farther Apology, I am now an Humble Suitour to all the Reverend Members of the Present Convocation, the National Synod of England, for Audience on the most Solemn Occasion of PEACE.

'Tis true, Reverend Fathers, the Difficulties which have hitherto appear'd in the way, to hinder and interrupt the Nations Peace, both Civil and Religious, have been very very many, and the Persons that have joyn'd in with those Unhappy Articles, have been not only many, but Men of Figure, of the first Magnitude; Men of such Degree, that has encreased the Difficulty, till the Work has been laid by Good Men, have despair'd of it, or at least have died in the Faith of it, as a thing remote, that may some time or other happen, when unforeseen Revolutions concur, and those things happen to come in Conjunction, which Men can hardly hope for.

And as these things have kept back the blessed Minute, when this Divided Nation should come to a General Union; so, My Lords, Great and seemingly Insuperable Difficulties lie yet in the way; and to most Eyes, the happy Juncture seems yet out of Sight. To me, I confess, it is not so; and pardon me, My Lords, if I say, That the whole of the Matter seems to lie before your Assembly.

As this is a great thing to say, and the Generals contain almost Infinite Particulars, I crave Leave to sum up into some Heads, which I shall enter into the Particulars of afterward. As,

1. It is in your Power to settle and secure the Private Peace and Reputation of the Church of England.

2. It is in your Power to take away all Pretence for an Occasional Bill.

3. It is in your Power to remove all manner of Ground for the late violent pretended

Apprehensions of the Danger of the Church.

4. It is in your Power to heal and make up the large Breach in the Church, restore her Communion, and Cure what is call'd by some, the Schism of the Nation.

5. It is in your Power to unite the Civil as well as Religious Interest of the Nation.

6. It is in your Power to bring all this to pass, not only by doing nothing but what you may do; but by doing nothing but what you cannot lawfully omit.

My Lords and Reverend Fathers of the Convocation, if these things are so, then you will by no means blame an humble Author, for laying these things at your Feet.

Nor let the Arguments here to be brought, receive less Weight in your Conclusions, from the meanest and most despicable Character their Author may have in your Thought, either by the Misrepresentations of Men, or the Prejudice at a Man differing and dissenting in some few very few, small very small Matters; since all that Prejudice will die with either an Answer, or a Grant to the Matters now to be laid before You; the Man, my Lords, would be no more a Dissenter, nor a Million of Families beside, were the Case now coming before your Lordships, brought to a Head.

*Dissenting*, my Lords, as some have call'd it; Political, not Religious Dissenting, if any such thing there is in the World, has no Concern in the Dispute of this Paper. A Religious Dissenter, I take to be a Protestant; one that would willingly conform to every thing, even for Peace-sake, that his Conscience can with any possible Satisfaction comply with; but that in such things as in which he cannot satisfy his Conscience, chooses to obey God rather than Man; even just so, my Lords, as the Church of England her self did when first she renounc'd the Errors of Popery.

Of such a Dissenter, no sincere Church of England Protestant can find in his heart to complain; between such a Dissenter and a Church man, there need be no want of Charity; and I am very sure there can really be no different Interest; their Civil Foundation is the same, their Prosperity and Confusion are brought to pass by the same means



and on both Sides pursued by the same Persons.

Such *Dissenters* cannot be suppress'd, but the Church of *England* will lose so many fast Friends, that on all Occasions have and ever will join with her in the General Defence of the Nation, and in the general Defence of the Protestant Religion, and in the particular Defence of the Church of *England*, whenever she comes to suffer either the Politick or Religious Invasions of Popery or Tyranny.

Such *Dissenters* can never see or desire to see the Church of *England* suppress'd, crush'd, or run down; but they must see or desire to see themselves exposed naked and defenceless to the Fury of an Adversary, which 'tis too plain, they cannot pretend to be able to defend themselves, and they cannot be rationally supposed so blind, as not to see it.

Such *Dissenters*, while we are considering them as Men, furnish'd with Reason enough to allow their being kept out of *Bedlam*, cannot be supposed to have the least Design against the present Establishment of the Church of *England*; and all the Clamours and pretended Apprehensions of the Danger of the Church of *England* from the *Dissenters*, I doubt not, having obtained your Lordship's Pardon for my Attempt, I shall in the Course of this Address make appear to be empty Suggestions, ungrounded, ignorant, or malicious, and to prove to your Lordships Satisfaction, and the Conviction of all the reasonable unprejudiced part of Mankind, that the present Circumstances of the Dissenting Interest in the Nation, is in itself and in its own Nature an absolute Security to the Church of *England*, and a direct unanswerable Proof, That the Church can never fall again into any Publick Disaster from the *Dissenters*.

And tho' this may seem a Paradox to some, yet I claim to make it out, and am content to submit to any Censure, if I fail in it; beseeching your Lordships, and the Reverend Gentlemen of your Lower House, to give

me but the fair Law of Argument, and all Men are wellcome, either Publickly or Privately to confute me if they can.

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